

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JUNE 6, 1896.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. MITCHELL, of Wisconsin, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

ADVERSE REPORT.

[To accompany S. 111.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (S. 111) to correct the military record of Reese P. Peoples, have considered the same, and respectfully report as follows:

The records of the War Department show that Reese Peoples was enrolled as a private in the Tenth Wisconsin Battery August 28, 1862, to serve three years; that he served faithfully until November 12, 1863, when he is reported as having deserted at Anderson, Tenn. In explanation of this report, Peoples stated, in 1885, that he was left sick at Anderson Gap, Tennessee; that he was ordered thence to Harrisons Landing in the fall of 1863, when he was taken prisoner by rebel cavalry and paroled; that he reported at Murfreesboro, and after going to Nashville and Louisville he went home and reported to the adjutant-general of Wisconsin, who gave him a certificate and transportation to his battery, which was then—April, 1864—stationed at Charleston, Tenn., and that he reported to his commanding officer, Captain Beebe.

Peoples further stated that he had performed service as blacksmith, for which the captain refused to pay him; that he refused to serve longer as blacksmith, whereupon the captain declined to recognize him as a member of the battery; that he then went home and reported to the provost-marshals of Pierce and St. Croix counties, Wis. In a subsequent affidavit Peoples stated that after he returned to his battery the captain wanted him to "lose his time," and upon his refusal put him in the guardhouse, where he remained sixteen days, when he was informed there were no charges against him; that he sent to Madison, Wis., for a certificate showing that he had never been sworn into the military service of the United States, but only for State service; that the officers found him unfit for service and sent him home.

The committee find that some of the material facts in the above statement are in conflict with the records of the War Department. The records show positively that he was mustered into the military service of the United States as a member of the Tenth Wisconsin Battery. There is no record that he was captured and paroled, as stated, or that he reported to the provost-marshals. There is no record that he surrendered himself in response to the President's offer of pardon to deserters, as stated.

There are many apparent discrepancies in the soldier's statement, and the corroborative testimony is not of a character to prove that

the charges of desertion were erroneously made or that the soldier was unfit for military service.

If we accept the explanation that the soldier was ill at Anderson Gap, and was subsequently taken prisoner at Harrisons Landing (of which there is no record evidence), there is no satisfactory evidence that he was prevented by disability from completing his term of enlistment after his return. The fact that he undertook to prove that he had never been sworn into the military service of the United States would seem to justify a denial of his application for an honorable discharge.

The committee is of the opinion that the bill should not pass.

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